

ASPULL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

FOR THE

Year ending December 31st, 1897.

breath repeatedly, the wall in front is saturated with a noxious moisture, and, although the cubic space in the building may come up to the required amount, the animals are in reality living in a polluted and unhealthy atmosphere, and under conditions the most favourable for conveying infection to each other.

Drainage. The newer erections are better provided in this respect, with the exception that in many of them the gulleys are inside the building, in most others the liquid runs its own course, with little or no attempt to direct it to a useful purpose, and by finding its way amongst the hollows and irregularities of badly paved yards, creates an unwholesome and disagreeable appearance.

Good tanks are much in need, both in a sanitary and economic point of view.

It must be at once apparent that a well paved, lighted, and ventilated building, well attended to and clean, of a comparatively small cubic air space, is much healthier than one with a larger air space, but the other essentials being reversed, also, that however diligent a cow-keeper may be, it is next to the impossible for him to make his place presentable where the buildings and surroundings are bad.

The question of unpaved back yards is one that I should like to again submit to your Council. The outbreak of infectious disease, especially Typhoid Fever, is nearly always on premises where the back yards are faulty. In many instances the privies and ashpits are on a higher level than the floors of the living rooms. As these receptacles must of necessity be periodically emptied into the yard before removal, the ground, often the playground for numerous children, must become a constant source of danger. Nothing less, in instances like these just mentioned, can possibly have any good effect, except efficient paving or flagging, and in such a manner as to be easily cleansed down. This condition of back yards, together with the wet ashpits formerly so common, which have been largely remedied by your energetic action, has been, I feel sure, the chief cause of so many outbreaks of Zymotic disease.

Another matter I should also like to impress, and that is, the necessity of more regular limewashing, and cleaning down of the interior of all dwellings, these apparently simple matters ought to be rigorously enforced in and about premises opening into enclosed yards or spaces.

The sanitary condition of the district generally, is without doubt undergoing steady improvement. The old fashioned ashpit system is being rapidly replaced by more improved buildings. The completion and satisfactory working of the sewage scheme has been a great relief to the previous system of cesspool and haphazard drainage. Frequent inspections of the district have been made by myself and Nuisance Inspector.

82 new privies and ashpits have been built during the year. 181 notices have been issued for the abatement of nuisances. 28 houses have been fumigated and cleaned down, and many other matters of small importance, brought under my notice by the Nuisance Inspector, have been remedied without the usual formal proceedings.

In my previous annual report, I drew your attention to the condition of Ash Lane and Withington Lane, these roads over which passes a very considerable amount of traffic, are still in a very unsatisfactory condition. No offensive trades have been carried on in the district, and it has not been necessary to condemn any articles of food exposed for sale. The water supply has been abundant, and of good quality.

I am, Gentlemen,

Obediently yours,

L. COOKE,

Medical Officer of Health.

In August, Diarrhoea was very prevalent, but was not of the fatal kind sometimes previously noticed. In October, Scarlet Fever made its appearance in Lower Gullet and Top Lock, 16 cases being notified during the month, two of those first discovered were sent to the Wigan Sanatorium, with the expectation that the outbreak might be cut short. It was discovered, however, that two children belonging to one family, had been suffering from this disease in a mild form, and had been allowed to mix with other children, thus accounting for the sudden outbreak.

In November, Measles became prevalent in Top Lock and Higher Gullet. Instead of closing the schools, suspected houses were visited, and those families excluded from school. This proceeding seems to have had the desired effect of considerably reducing the number of fresh cases. In December, the number of new cases was considerably diminished; the deaths registered in this month were the highest for the year, and were chiefly due to diseases of the chest.

On March 1st, the Committee appointed, consisting of four members of your Council, myself, and Nuisance Inspector, commenced the inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds and Milk-shops, in the township. The inspection was continued on the 4th and 5th, every farm or place coming under any of the above headings was visited, and notes taken on their condition and sanitary arrangements. All the tenants or occupiers gave most willingly every assistance and information to the Committee. Besides going over the farm buildings, to which our investigations were chiefly directed, careful observations were taken on the sanitary state of the dwellings, which were also submitted to your Council.

It might perhaps be advisable before entering into details, to consider what are the essential requirements of a healthy cowshed and dairy, they are

1st. *Light*, which should be sufficient to penetrate to all parts of the building.

2nd. *Ventilation*. To be carried out in such a manner as to facilitate a ready exchange of air, without causing too much draught.

3rd. *Air Space*. Sufficient to afford 600 cubic feet for each animal, this to include a well-ventilated space or range in front of the cattle, of not less than 4 feet in width; no space higher than 14 feet from ground to be included in the measurement.

4th. *Drainage*. Drains to have a good fall. Trap and Gully to be outside the building.

5th. *Water Supply*. Of a good quality and easy of access.

6th. The walls and ceiling should be smooth, so as to be easily cleaned down or limewashed, the floors of an impervious material, such as bricks or setts grouted in cement, with channel, and a sufficient fall to render cleansing easy, provision to be made for removal of all liquids to tanks or sewer. The stalls when single not less than 4 feet wide, when double not less than 7 feet; length of stalls, *i.e.*, from manger to back wall, 14 feet; yard outside building over which the cattle pass, to be paved in a similar way to that mentioned for the inside.

Dairy should be a large airy apartment, well lighted and ventilated, walls and ceiling smooth and limewashed, floor well flagged and arranged, with fall to gulley placed outside, entrance to dairy from outside, and to have as little connection with dwelling houses as possible.

By having these few facts before us, it will materially simplify the task of finding the shortcomings, if any, of the various places visited.

Referring to them generally it would seem that the provision for light had been ignored or overlooked by the cowshed architect, very few were found sufficiently lighted, and many had none at all. Ventilation is not well understood; many were found without. Some provided with original and unique methods, mostly failures, but it must be admitted that it is no easy task in a changeable climate like ours, to ventilate a building not provided with any artificial warmth, and at the same time to retain a temperature necessary to the well being of the cattle, more especially does this apply to buildings where this has been neglected when erected.

Air-space.—Generally deficient, a few only coming up to the necessary standard of 600 cubic feet for each animal, but it is not sufficient that a certain amount of cubic space be provided, the arrangements ought to be such as to allow a free breathing space in front. In many cowsheds the objectionable method is adopted of tying the cows with their heads close to a blank wall, the consequence is, the animals are breathing their own

ASPULL, WIGAN,

January 31st, 1898.

To the Chairman and Members of the Aspull District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1897, also the various lists required by the Local Government Board and County Council.

During the year 308 births were registered : 140 males, 168 females ; giving a birth rate of 34·4 per 1000 per annum. The deaths registered numbered 166 : males, 90 ; females, 76 ; equal to a death rate of 18·5 per 1000 per annum.

49 deaths were registered under 1 year of age, slightly less than the preceding year, giving a death rate of 159·0 per 1000 births.

The following Table will show the ages at which all deaths were registered :

Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	49
Between 1 and 5 years	...	...	...	...	...	32
„ 5 „ 15	„	...	...	...	...	5
„ 15 „ 25	„	...	...	...	...	6
„ 25 „ 65	„	...	...	...	...	50
Over 65 years	...	...	...	...	...	24
Total						<u>166</u>

Those due to the principal diseases were : Bronchitis and Pneumonia, 57 ; Heart Diseases, 8 ; Phthisis, 4 ; Injuries, 4 ; Diarrhœa, 4 ; Measles, 2 ; Whooping Cough, 3 ; Scarlet Fever, 2 ; Typhoid Fever, 4 ; Diphtheria, 1 ; Erysipelas, 1 ; Croup, 1 ; Influenza, 2 ; all other causes, 73. Total 166.

Those deaths due to the principal Zymotic diseases numbered 16, equal to a Zymotic death rate of 1·78 per 1000 per annum.

69 cases were reported under the Notification Act. Scarlet Fever, 46 ; Erysipelas, 10 ; Diphtheria, 6 ; Enteric Fever, 5 ; Membranous Croup, 2. Total 69.

The health of the township during the past year may be considered to have been fairly satisfactory. The death rate from the Zymotic diseases is the least recorded, with one exception, during the last 12 years, when it was equalled in 1895. The number of cases reported under the Notification Act also compares favourably with previous years. In 1893, 208 cases were reported ; in 1894, 129 ; in 1895, 151 ; in 1896, 175 ; and during the past year, 69.

In the early part of the year the amount of sickness throughout the district was remarkably small, and with the exception of diseases of the respiratory organs, sickness was much less than is usual in January, February, March and April, and the infectious diseases which were so prevalent during the latter part of the previous year showed a marked decrease. In January, a fatal case of Typhoid Fever occurred at the bottom of Ivy Brow. The back premises belonging to these houses were brought under your notice, and the sanitary defects which were considerable, have been remedied.

In March, two other cases were reported, one at Sunnyside, and one in “ Black Horse ” Square, Higher Gullet. The block of property between these two points was the subject of a special report, a copy of which I append. I may mention that since this report, the suggestions therein advised have been largely carried out, and most of the sanitary defects remedied.

In May, two cases of Diphtheria were reported at Marsh House, one terminating fatally. The drains and generally bad sanitary arrangements were quite sufficient to account for the outbreak, and on communication with the owners, were at once put in a satisfactory condition. In July 4 cases were reported of Diphtheria, but none of them proved fatal ; there was a sufficiency of proof about the dwellings to account for each case.